



Why I Believe in Santa Claus



Citizens From all the Walks of Life in Rock Island Breathe True Christmas Spirit in Letters to The Argus

DR. E. F. BARTHOLOMEW.



H. M. SCHRIVER.



H. E. CASTEEL.



HON. L. S. M'GABE.



Breathes there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said at some time in his life, "I do believe in Santa Claus."

If there be doubt in the mind of any boy or girl in Rock Island who has been striving to do his best or her best in order to win the favor, either in larger or smaller quantity, of the mysterious little elf, let his or her doubts be forever dispelled.

People of various avocations in Rock Island, grown people, too, have written The Argus letters expressing their faith both in Santa Claus and the spirit that makes his visitations such a glad occasion for childhood.

So that any boy or girl in Rock Island who fears that Santa Claus will fail to visit every deserving child in this city may put anxiety on that score aside. Santa Claus will be on the job as usual.

A POPULAR MOVEMENT.

For three years The Argus has conducted, with most gratifying results, a Santa Claus movement for poor children, accompanied by what is known as the Good Fellowship opportunity for all who may desire to play Santa Claus themselves. The conditions of this enterprise are familiar to most people, and in order to bring the Santa Claus sentiment in all that it means to childhood, home to those good-hearted people who have aided The Argus Santa Claus movement in the past and are aiding it this season, as well as to show to the little people that their elders have the same affectionate fervor for the little fat man that they have, The Argus recently addressed a brief note to a number of people, taken indiscriminately from the various walks of life in Rock Island, to this effect:

THE INVITATION.

"The Argus will be pleased to have you write for it a story of about 100 words on 'Why I Believe in Santa Claus,' to be published with similar communications as a feature of The Argus Annual Santa Claus Fund for Poor Children."

With rare exception the note was promptly answered. Fully 80 per cent of the people addressed responded, just as the mood happened to take them at the time. Some wrote that they were preparing replies to send in later, others 'phoned that they would be glad to write if they had the time, while today's mail brought several answers, too late for use in this connection.

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

What is most significant in all the letters that appear in this connection, is the manner in which all catch the spirit of Christmas. All that pertains to it in myth or legend or tradition seems to arouse a feeling belonging peculiarly to this time of year. It is a feeling of affection and of universal good will and good cheer. But, read for yourself, why the older people of Rock Island believe in Santa Claus, as indicated by the letters that have been sent to The Argus:

A REAL SANTA CLAUS STORY.

"Auntie, do you believe in Santa Claus?" "Why, yes, dear, to be sure I do. Let me tell you a story and then you will know why I believe in him. Last year, just before Christmas, some good-hearted men, fearing that the task of looking up all the children was too much for Santa Claus who is growing old you know, decided to help him out. They started a Santa Claus fund and everybody who wished could take a part in this good work. The people responded so well to their appeals, that a generous sum was soon realized, and this was placed in the hands of a committee who immediately got in touch with Santa, and on Christmas eve many homes were visited and scores of children were made happy. I haven't the time to tell you of all the places that were visited, but will tell you of one family where Santa Claus' visit was especially appreciated.

Little Dorothy, six years of age, was the eldest of a family of four children, who had lately moved into the

DR. G. L. EYSTER.



"Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus," Wrote a Great Editor to a Little Girl.

Once a little girl wrote this letter to Charles A. Dana, the great editor of the New York Sun:

Dear Editor: I am eight years old. Some of my friends say that there is no Santa Claus. Papa says: "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth. Is there a Santa Claus?

VIRGINIA O. HANLON.

And the editor of The Sun, mighty man of invective and sarcasm, became "even as a little child," and wrote the following charming reply, than which in all the realm of childhood sentiment there is nothing sweeter:

Virginia: Your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They will not believe except they see.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.

He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauties and joy.

Alas, how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

You might get your papa to hire men to watch all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men see. Nobody can see or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in this world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest that ever lived can ever tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love and romance can push aside that curtain and view the picture, supernal beauty and glory beyond.

Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing so real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God, he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia—nay ten times ten thousand years from now—he will continue to make glad the hearts of childhood.

MISS DINA RAMSER.



steps leading into the basement, the door flew open, and there, stood Santa Claus, carrying a large basket, the other arm full of bundles, and accompanied by a beautiful young lady, who also had her arms full of bundles. The children recovering from their great surprise, looked on in amazement, as all sorts of presents, toys of every description, books, warm mittens, stockings and caps, as well as bags containing all sorts of good things, oranges, apples, candy, nuts, and cakes, were distributed, until every one was well supplied, and Oh! wonder of wonders! Dorothy found herself hugging a large beautiful doll! Santa and his companion disappeared as suddenly as they had appeared and after they were gone a large basket was opened, which contained everything imaginable necessary for a good Christmas dinner. The next day a lady who dropped in to see the family, was greeted by happy faced children, eager to show their presents, and Dorothy with shining eyes cried, "Oh! Santa Claus came to see us last night, and he brought me this dollie." "And Mrs. Santa Claus came too, and she gave me this," cried little Carl, joyfully banging away on his drum.

The mother, with tears in her eyes, tried to tell of what Santa's visit meant to them, of the good dinner they enjoyed, which was the first for a long, long time, and there in the damp, dark basement came joy and happiness, because Santa Claus had found them.

DINA RAMSER.

WHERE SANTA TAUGHT A LESSON.

The query indicates that some one has doubt as to the existence of Santa Claus and for the benefit of that person, I will tell how I discovered that there really is a Santa Claus. While quite young, I conceived the idea that some one was fooling me and I openly expressed my disbelief in Santa Claus. I was sure that it was someone about

H. A. J. M'DONALD.



MISS MARGARET GILES.



the house who had been filling my stockings for years with good things and when I arose that Christmas morning, I was confident that my stocking would be filled as usual.

It was, but the filling was ashes and then I knew that Santa Claus had punished me. Since then I have been faithful to him and he generally remembers me.

O. L. BRUNER.

I BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUS. Aye, Aye; Oul, Oul; And once again YOU BET I DO.

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself has said—"

F. G. YOUNG.



"Twas the night before Christmas, And all through the house Not a creature was stirring, Not even a mouse"

And again "He had a red nose And a little round belly That shook when he laughed Like a bowlful of jelly." If these words portray not the truth, then indeed am I deceived.

HUGH E. CURTIS.

REAL HAPPINESS.

Any move or any ideal that looks to the making of children happy at Christmas time is a worthy one. True happiness is in making others happy and there is no happiness so real as in seeing the innocent happiness of children.

H. H. HULL.

EMBODIMENT OF CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

I believe in the embodiment of the Christmas spirit of good cheer, kindness, and thoughtfulness for others, as personified in the jolly old Santa Claus.

It is difficult for a child to grasp an idea in the abstract, therefore let his little world be peopled with "Santa Claus," "Jack Frost," "the Sandman" and others from the realm of fancy.

As he grows older, instead of losing the idea of Santa Claus, let him embody the spirit of the dear old man, and make it a part of himself to manifest in deeds later in life.

Long live Santa Claus, and all he represents!

MARGARET A. GILES.

THE GENEROUS IMPULSE.

The spirit of giving is composed of two elements of human goodness: First, the generous impulse of a good heart; and, secondly, the social instinct that recognizes that man cannot live wholly unto himself. What makes the day glad? What precludes the coming of the physical or mental pain and worry? What makes the contemplation of the present, and the memory of the past, sweet?

It is very largely a good heart in one's self and in those round about; in family, in neighborhood, in citizenship. Add to this a sociable nature, a disposition to mingle with others, to share, in common, joys and sorrows; in other words, to do team work, and we have the spirit of giving full up and rounded over.

ROBERT W. OLMSTED.

PERPETUATES CHILD'S LIFE.

I believe in the Santa Claus legend, because it serves to perpetuate in the life of the child an interesting romance which is harmless in itself and is a means of keeping alive the memories and customs of the Christmas festival. If it can be called a delusion, it is one of those cherished delusions of life of which we never wish to be disillusioned. It appeals to the child-heart as nothing else in the round of the year's experiences ever does. It calls up associations which are precious to every child and which tend to keep alive the gift idea and cultivate the feeling of generosity.

It has a world of meaning to the child which we cannot afford to neglect. It helps all of us, at least once a year, to be like children and to sympathize with the innocent pleasures and enjoyments of childhood.

It strengthens the sweet bonds of home life, it makes sacred the memories and customs of the nursery and the fireside, it connects the silent, holy night of yule-tide with things spiritual and unseen in the wondering heart of childhood.

E. F. BARTHOLOMEW.

BECAUSE HE IS SO REAL.

Why do I believe in Santa Claus? Because he is so real. The thought of his coming brings such joy to the children, and because of it the stockings are hung up, and there is a season when every child tries his best to be good, that he may be in proper standing with the dispenser of so many real Christmas surprises.

Belief in Santa Claus enhances the

DR. W. S. MARQUIS.



O. L. BRUNER.



W. S. M'COMBS.



M. H. SEXTON.

